

## WEST GERMANY:

### Question Time

Remember that old saying about a Communist under every bed? Well, there's a grain of truth in it. Or at least there certainly is for anyone who ever had the pleasure of resting, so to speak, at 4 Clausewitz Strasse, West Berlin. Pension Clausewitz the place calls itself, after the great Prussian military strategist Gen. Karl von Clausewitz, and indeed it looks like one of the many hundreds of modest, shabbily genteel, family-style pension-hotels that abound in the former German capital. But it isn't. It is a brothel, and has been for a quarter of a century or more.

Pension Clausewitz has always been a brothel with a difference, though. During World War II, Joseph Goebbels installed listening devices in its walls to hear what neutral and Axis diplomats were saying in their least guarded moments. The war ended and the owners, the girls, and the customers of Pension Clausewitz changed with the years. But no one ever bothered to remove those extra ears.

The latest owner, Hans Helmcke, 47, a smooth, cigar-chomping male madam, kept up the high tone of the establishment with red plush boudoirs, soft pink lights, and lovely young girls, many of whom were elegant but bored housewives whose husbands believed them to be out playing bridge. So superior was the Pension Clausewitz in its chosen field, in fact, that its patrons—who included many prominent politicians, senior police officers, and Western diplomats—cheerfully paid \$45 for room, champagne, and service.

**Wondering:** In time, however, some of the Clausewitz patrons began to wonder at the questions their playmates consistently put to them—little things like, what plans did West Germany have for developing better relations with Eastern European countries? Or what reaction could be expected if the Communists put the squeeze on Berlin again? And when Heinz Wiechmann, the head of West Berlin's counterintelligence service, heard about this kind of questioning, he was more than somewhat upset. Wiechmann had assumed that Helmcke and all those ears were working for him alone. But instead it appeared that they were also working for Wiechmann's Communist competitors in East Berlin.

Naturally, the Clausewitz was raided.

Tape recorders and other listening devices were removed to police headquarters along with a notebook of Helmcke's containing the telephone numbers of secret contacts. Helmcke himself was hustled off to jail—where perhaps he found some small comfort in the fact that security chief Wiechmann was soon removed from his post for refusing to divulge the names of the Clausewitz's patrons to the Berlin government.

The chances are good that with so many politicians and diplomats involved, Helmcke will escape trial for espionage.



Helmcke: A bedroom spy?

—in which case he will not face anything worse than a charge of *Kuppelei* (procurement). But until that is sure, the patrons of the former Pension Clausewitz—it finally closed last week—will be uneasy men.